

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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UNCLAS SINGAPORE 1624

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BGEN, BEXP, SN
SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION, SINGAPORE
USIMC JULY 11-15, 1978

REF: MOORE-EARLE TELECON OF 4/8/78, USDOC 5602

1. SUMMARY: CCAG RECOMMENDS THAT SUBJECT SHOW BE CANCELLED, GIVEN DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING OTHER THAN TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS. END SUMMARY.

2. USDOC REFTEL INDICATES THAT ALMOST ONLY RESPONSE TO SUBJECT SHOW HAS COME FROM US TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS. GIVEN SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN REGIONAL MARKET, WE CONSIDER CHANCES OF DRAWING SATISFACTORY AUDIENCE QUITE LOW.

3. MAJOR DEVELOPMENT WAS ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES ASSN. (EIA) EXHIBITION IN SINGAPORE IN FEBRUARY 1978. ALMOST ALL MAJOR US TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS WERE REPRESENTED, AND ATTENDANCE FROM OUTSIDE SINGAPORE WAS HIGH. WE DOUBT THAT MANY FOREIGN VISITORS WOULD CARE TO REPEAT TRIP TO SINGAPORE SO QUICKLY, ESPECIALLY FOR MUCH SMALLER SHOW.

4. SECOND DEVELOPMENT WAS RECENT EXPERIENCE OF ITT AND GTE IN TENDERING FOR MAJOR CONTRACT TO UPGRADE SINGAPORE
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TELEPHONE SYSTEM. ALTHOUGH RESULTS HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED, WE UNDERSTAND JAPANESE HAVE WON BY UNDERBIDDING US FIRMS BY AT LEAST 25 PERCENT AND POSSIBLY AS MUCH AS 55 PERCENT. ALTHOUGH SINGAPORE OFFICIALS SEEM TO RECOGNIZE TECHNICAL SUPERIORITY OF US SYTEM, PRICE IS STILL MAJOR DETERMINING FACTOR. US EXPERIENCE IN OTHER REGIONAL MARKETS HAS ALSO BEEN DISCOURAGING. GTE LOST MAJOR TELEPHONE CONTRACT

IN PHILIPPINES TO GERMANS, THAI MARKETS SEEM TO BE GOING TO JAPANESE, AND INDONESIANS ARE NOT GENERALLY READY FOR HIGHER-TECHNOLOGY US SYSTEMS DESPITE THEIR ONGOING SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM.

5. ALTHOUGH AT TIME OF MARKET RESEARCH IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT TYPE APPROVAL WOULD POSE PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS HAVE RECENTLY ARISEN ABOUT COMPATABILITY OF US EQUIPMENT WITH SINGAPORE TELEPHONE SYSTEM; LOCAL CANCER SOCIETY, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS FORCED TO POSTPONE INAUGURATION OF ITS DIAL-IN INFORMATION SERVICE BECAUSE US EQUIPMENT IT HAD PURCHASED DID NOT HAVE TELECOM AUTHORITY'S TYPE APPROVAL. EMBASSY ADMIN OFFICER WAS RECENTLY TOLD THAT NO US PABX SYSTEM COULD BE INSTALLED AT EMBASSY BECAUSE OF INCOMPATIBILITY WITH CITY PHONE SYSTEM.

6. GIVEN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ARE FRANKLY PUZZLED THAT US TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS HAVE RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO USDOC RECRUITING EFFORTS. USIMC HAS MET WITH NEGATIVE RESPONSES FROM LOCAL REPS OF MAJOR US FIRMS (ITT, GTE); IF USDOC IS AWARE OF POSITIVE FACTORS IN LOCAL MARKET WE HAVE OVERLOOKED, WE WOULD APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO REEXAMINE OUR POSITION BEFORE FINAL DECISION IS MADE.
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